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ABSTRACT

This document describes the 25 exemplary programs serving young children and their families in West Virginia. The programs were participating in the final stages of a process for state recognition as an exemplary program by the Early Education Quality Improvement Project Committee of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission in West Virginia in 1996. Nominations for exemplary programs were submitted statewide, and the 25 programs described here were selected on the basis of an evaluation by a review committee in the following areas: parent activities, community involvement, collaborative partnerships, staff development, communicating with parents, marketing/public awareness, team planning, use of volunteers, community service, curriculum, inclusion, transition, and cultural diversity. Each of the program descriptions contains: (1) a brief description of the program and contact information; (2) ideas to share regarding programming; (3) advice from the program regarding important program components; and (4) highlights of the program's exemplary practices. Included in the document is additional information on the recognition process, a stipend application for interested programs to visit exemplary program sites, and information on obtaining stipends for seeking accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Also included is a list of the essential elements of program quality and a list of resources. (KB)

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PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Exemplary Programs Serving West Virginia's Young Children and Their Families

PS 025795

Issued by the
GOVERNOR'S CABINET ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

March 1997

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PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

Exemplary Programs Serving West Virginia's Young Children and Their Families

presented by the

West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families

State Capitol Complex

Building 1, Room R 150

1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.

Charleston, WV 25305

phone (304) 558-0600

fax (304) 558-0596

e-mail: cabinet@citynet.net

http://www.citynet.net/wvfamilies/

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The United Methodist Church Conference Council on Children's Ministries
United National Bank

EQUIP Advisory Committee

Marilyn Alvaro, North Central West Virginia Head Start

Margy Burns, Youth Health Services

Kay Carpenter, Webster County Board of Education

Cathy Forsythe, Link Child Care Resource & Referral

Norma Gray, River Valley Child Development Services

Patrick Hall, Ritchie County Family Resource Network

Ginger Huffman, WV Department of Education

Barbara Merrill, Governor's Cabinet on Children & Families

Carol Perroncel, Appalachia Educational Laboratory

Jo Ann Richards, RESA VIII

Pam Roush, WV Dept. of Health and Human Resources

Kem Short, McDowell County Action Network

Jackie Thompson, First Presbyterian Church Preschool

Thomasine Troisi, Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission

Les Ulm, Eastern Regional Task Force on Children, Youth & Familes

Kimberly Veraas, Governor's Cabinet on Children & Families

Exemplary Programs Serving West Virginia's Young Children and Their Families

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Child artwork by MAJOR WeRKS!

INTRODUCTION

The EQUIP (Early Education Quality Improvement Project) Committee of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission in 1996 sought to recognize exemplary programs serving young children and their families. Nominations for exemplary programs were submitted statewide. Programs were evaluated by a review committee in the following areas:

- Parent Activities
- Community Involvement
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Staff Development
- Communication with Parents
- Marketing/Public Awareness
- Team Planning
- Use of Volunteers
- Community Service
- Curriculum
- Inclusion
- Transition
- Cultural Diversity

Using these criteria, the committee selected first 25, then 18 programs for further review. These programs were visited by a team of 2 to 3 people. The visits were followed by observations conducted by Bibro and Associates. The reviewers utilized the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale or ECERS to evaluate the finalists. From their evaluations, seven top programs were selected to receive a financial award. The 25 programs that were evaluated in the final stages of this process are included in this publication.

The EQUIP Committee hopes that this book will encourage others to learn from the exemplary programs in West Virginia and incorporate their successful ideas into their own programs. A fund is being established to encourage others in the early childhood field to make on-site visits of the exemplary programs. There is also a fund to encourage early childhood programs to seek accreditation status from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Additional information and a stipend application are included in this book.

We commend all of the applicants in this process for their pursuit of excellence in improving the lives of young children and their families.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

Programs Serving West Virginia's Young Children and Their Families Receiving Top Honors and a Financial Incentive Award

CHILDREN'S P.L.A.C.E.

625 Richmond Street
Huntington, WV 25702
phone **(304) 525-8586**
fax **(304) 697-0355**
Contact: Marsha Dawson

Children's P.L.A.C.E. is a child care center located in Huntington, WV. The center serves children 12 months through kindergarten. There is also a summer program for school age children. Children's P.L.A.C.E. works in collaboration with various agencies to provide a wide range of services for children with special needs. There are two inclusive classrooms at the center. Children's P.L.A.C.E. is accredited by NAEYC.

Good Advice
from Children's P.L.A.C.E.

A high quality child care program can be an important resource for a community and its future.

Ideas to Share...

- Children's P.L.A.C.E. offers child care services one Saturday night a month. This allows parents a night out and the child is cared for in a familiar setting with familiar people.
- If a teacher senses a need to remove a child from a classroom for a short period of time due to acting out behavior, the child is brought to an area where a couch, rug, books, magazines, a child size doll and a large tank of colorful fish have been set up. The child will more than likely calm himself/herself down by watching the movement of the fish. The childsize doll is unique in that it has three interchangeable faces (angry, crying and smiling) and serves as a comfort or expressive tool for the child.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Community Involvement

- cosponsored an early childhood conference.
- provides developmental screenings.
- takes a high-profile role in child advocacy activities.

Staff Development

- staff members brush up on sign language skills and picture communication.
- staff is provided with release time so they can participate in the development of the student IEP through Cabell County Schools.
- the center provides staff many opportunities for professional growth, including various workshops, mentoring opportunities and encouraging attendance at local, state and national conferences.

Diversity

- all children and families are valued and acknowledged.
- care is made to provide children a rich anti-bias curriculum with a strong emphasis on cultural awareness.

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Mason County Vo-Tech Center
Ohio River Road
Point Pleasant, WV 25550
phone **(304) 675-4956**
fax **(304) 675-3413**
Contact: Jane Haddox

Children's Village is a child care center located in the small town of Point Pleasant in Mason County. The center was designed and opened in cooperation with Mason County Schools to help meet the child care needs of teen parents returning to school. The location of the facility in the Vocational School allows some parents to drop off their children for care and attend GED, vocational or high school training. There is an early intervention program for children with special needs. The center is a program of River Valley Child Development Services. Children's Village is accredited by NAEYC.

Good Advice
from Children's Village

Seek accreditation through NAEYC. It is an excellent team building experience.

Ideas to Share...

- The Mason County Vocational Child Care apprenticeship training program is conducted in the classroom adjoining Children's Village. The students gain practical experiences working in the center and the help is greatly appreciated.

- During the summer months, Children's Village serves the school age siblings of the children enrolled in the program as well as other school-age children in the community. This not only allows staff the experience of working with children at different developmental levels, but also allows the younger children in the program the opportunity to interact with older children. The older children serve as models and helpers to the younger children in the program.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Parent Activities

- parents are encouraged to visit the site at any time and they participate in field trips, dinners, fundraisers and classroom activities.
- a Parent Advisory Committee is involved with decision making.

Community Activities

- sponsor of community "Carnival and Petting Zoo" during the Week of the Young Child.
- field trips to library, fire department, county fair, dentist, hospital, furniture store, pet shop.

Parent Communication

- daily feedback, notices and bulletins are posted, bi-monthly newsletters.

Staff Development

- staff members participate in the U.S. Dept. of Labor Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist program.

EARLY LEARNING
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

432 Second Street
Huntington, WV 25701
phone **(304) 523-3971**
fax **(304) 523-2678**
Contact: Suzi Brodof

Early Learning Child Development Center is a child care program that serves the downtown area of Huntington, WV. It is housed in a new facility built in 1994. A state of the art playground at the center is designed to serve both typical children and children with special needs, with a special focus for children with visual impairments. The center serves children 12 months to 5 years of age. Early Learning Child Development Center is a program of River Valley Child Development Services and is accredited by NAEYC.

Good Advice
from Early Learning...

Seek accreditation through NAEYC. It is an excellent tool for establishing quality in your program.

Ideas to Share...

- New families are invited to the center for an orientation meeting. They are presented with a packet of information and a parent handbook explaining policies, philosophy, enrollment, fees, daily schedule, health care and discipline methods. This is an opportunity to observe, meet the staff, ask questions, and decide if this center will meet their expectations for quality child care.
- The center hosts an annual Thanksgiving dinner for parents and children.
- Another parent plus are videotapes made of the children during special activities or field trips for the parents to view.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Inclusion

- totally integrated inclusion program. Center employs a full time director and full-time early intervention teacher.

Community Involvement

- Week of the Young Child, St. Jude's Trike-a-Thon, Foster Grandparent program.

Staff Development

- degreed and associate teachers.
- all new teachers are encouraged to participate in the Apprenticeship program through the U.S. Department of Labor.

Parent Involvement

- encouraged to visit program as well as participate in dinners, field trips, raffles etc.

GREENBRIER HEAD START

202 Chestnut Street
Lewisburg, WV 24901
phone (304) 647-6470
fax (304) 647-6490
Contact: Terri Wontrobski

***G**reenbrier Head Start* program serves children 3 and 4 years of age in Greenbrier County. The Head Start program also provides a range of services for the families of young children, including weekly parent training programs that focus on Active Parenting, Money Management and Nutrition. Parents are guided in their role as primary educators on their weekly Home Visits. These visits also include services in social service, education and health and nutrition. Families and the community are all involved in making Greenbrier Head Start a quality program for young children.

Good Advice
from Greenbrier Head Start...

The most important component of preschool programs is parent involvement. This sets the tone for family interaction and future success.

Ideas to Share...

- Greenbrier Head Start has a parental involvement goal of 100%. Staff provide creative incentives to parents who provide support and volunteer time to the program. One incentive is a coupon awarded for cleaning supplies (detergent, furniture polish, bleach and other items that can't be purchased with food stamps) that can be redeemed at a local store. The coupons are donated by a store owner who is a former Head Start grandparent.
- Students are part of the "Every Mountaineer a Volunteer" program. First graders are a mentor to the Head Start children and read to them once a month. Each child is assigned a buddy in this program.
- Grants provide ten books a year for each child to have their own small library.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Staff Development

- all aide/home visitors are participating in the U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist program.
- the Parent Involvement and Social Service Coordinators are participants in the Family Service Provider Training from Indiana University.
- teachers are all pre-school certified and home visitors have their CDA (Child Development Associate).

Parent Involvement

- at least two parent volunteers are in Head Start centers each day.
- Head Start parents are offered the opportunity for continuing education classes.
- child development skills are enhanced by the use of individual lesson plans for each family during home visits.

Collaborative Partnerships

- high school students receive training and assist with Head Start.
- women from Women's Federal Prison are involved in a collaborative program with Head Start which includes story telling, teaching a black history unit and painting wall murals.

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NORTHERN PANHANDLE HEAD START, INC.

51 16th Street
Wheeling, WV 26003
phone (304) 233-3290
fax (304) 233-3719
Contact: Patricia J. Gracey

***N**orthern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.* provides an array of services to children and families including home instruction, family support, early intervention, and health care. The agency is active in the community and in children's advocacy groups, having encouraged area organizations to send two bus loads of people to Washington, D.C. for the national Stand for Children rally. Through collaborative partnerships, Northern Panhandle Head Start initiates projects that benefit families and meet their individual and diverse needs. The agency is dedicated to staff development, team planning and volunteer recruitment.

Good Advice
from Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.

NPHS has learned that the needs of all children are interconnected throughout the community and that all families want to raise happy, healthy children. This takes a web of caring people who believe in them.

Ideas to Share...

- At each of NPHS's 14 licensed centers there is an additional parent room or suite where adult activities take place daily. Four components are addressed in all family service centers: Family Health and Wellness including substance abuse reduction, Literacy, Employability including computer education and Parenting Education including living skills.
- The Extended Year Program helped to transition Brooke County children entering kindergarten by providing classroom activities, field trips and home visits prior to the commencement of the school year.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Parent Activities

- 1995-96, 792 parents and community members provided 37,501 hours volunteering.
- parents assisted with interviewing and hiring of staff, participated in planning, budget committee and Policy Council.

Staff Development

- each staff member completes an individual training needs assessment and a program plan meets individual and group needs.
- 1996-97, 38 in-house training sessions provided.
- professionals hold seminars on their various fields of expertise.
- specialized training to all employees.
- supervisor training using the behavior modeling approach.

Team Planning

- planning includes both parents and staff.
- each year a group of 25 professionals review program plans and make suggestions.
- a strategic planning team is creating the program's future.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

P.O. Box 23
Hundred, WV 26675-0023
phone (304) 775-5221 or 775-2895
fax (304) 775-2922
Contact: Susan Hill

***P**arents as Teachers* is an early intervention program in Wetzel County that emphasizes the importance of parents as their children's first teachers. During home visits parent concerns such as discipline, stress and sibling rivalry are addressed and parents receive informational brochures on a variety of developmental topics. The focus of the visit is the parent activity and the parent's involvement in the activity. The Parent Educator often assists families on a personal level, such as helping with HUD applications and transporting families to medical appointments.

Good Advice
from Parents As Teachers...

Even though we are the "professional", it's more important to be a friend, to be genuinely concerned about the entire family and listen.

Ideas to Share...

- During home visits parents learn that they don't have to buy expensive educational toys for their children. The Parent Educator shows them how household items such as measuring spoons, measuring cups, turkey basters and lids from gallon jugs can all become educational toys.
- Parents as Teachers works with the Hundred Detachment of the West Virginia State Police to provide summer packets for families. These packets include free materials on bike safety, having a safe summer, staying away from strangers, gun safety, child abduction and the bicycle helmet law. Pencils and rulers are included for the children.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Curriculum

- Parents As Teachers has a nationally recognized curriculum based on years of research and developed by those recognized as authorities in the field of child development.
- The curriculum addresses Social Development, Fine and Gross Motor Development, Intellectual Development and Emotional Development.
- A drug education program is being added to the curriculum.

Transition

- The parent educator organizes a visitation day for the Head Start children entering school in the fall. The kindergarten teacher is there to greet the future students and participates in an activity with them.
- The parent educator assists families moving from one attendance area to another by contacting schools, providing parents with information needed to transfer from one school to another and contacting the new classroom teachers for information on materials needed.

UPSHUR HUMAN RESOURCES

8 Cleveland Avenue
Buckhannon, WV 26201
phone (304) 472-2016
fax (304) 472-2012
Contact: Sandra M. Pennington

***U**pshur Human Resources'* Head Start program has been serving the children and families of Upshur County for 31 years. There is a home visiting program. A Family Literacy program is available for parents who need to improve their literacy skills. Parents are involved in every aspect, from serving on the governing board to volunteering in the classroom. Children with special needs are mainstreamed into Head Start classrooms utilizing an individualized lesson plan for each child.

Good Advice
from Upshur Human Resources...
Parent involvement is essential during the early years. Provide encouragement and training to parents to be the primary educator and role model for young children.

Ideas to Share...

- Recently staff development has been enhanced through the development of a two and four year early childhood degree program with Glenville State College. A tuition waiver program was established which offers academic classes at a minimal fee for UHR employees. All employees are encouraged to participate in the program, which thus far, has proven to be successful.
- UHR teaches children about different races and cultures with books and dolls. Occasionally, a professional of a different nationality will visit the centers and talk with the children. Monthly, a special food dish of a different culture is placed on the menu and served. Children sometimes assist with the preparation.

Other Exemplary Areas...

Community Involvement/Volunteers

- 15,000 hours annually are donated each year by the community and the parents.
- volunteers work in classrooms, aid on buses, donate professional services, goods, financial support and participate in child/parent activities.

Team Planning

- representatives from the local staff association, parent committees, policy council, and board of directors make up the UHR committee membership. All groups are represented and have input in decision making.
- suggestion boxes will be installed at all centers for further parent input.

Curriculum/Transition

- all Head Start classrooms have prepared and approved lesson plans completed in advance.
- children are transitioned into the public school system with a visit to kindergarten and meeting with the kindergarten teachers.

Programs With Exemplary Components

Braxton County Board of Education

Contact: Morna Greene
411 N. Hill Rd.
Sutton, WV 26601
phone (304) 765-7118
fax (304) 765-7148

Program Type: Head Start & county-funded program

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 4

Years in Operation: 10

An Idea to Share...

Parents are encouraged to participate as classroom volunteers. To reward such participation volunteers are recognized each month in the newsletter. Yearly certificates, pins and other awards are given. Lunches are provided for parents who work in the classroom or attend training sessions.

Exemplary Practices:

- Provides opportunities for parent involvement.
- Works with other community organizations to provide additional services for families.
- Communicates with parents through monthly newsletters that include articles by the teachers and parenting information.

Good Advice
from Braxton County Board of Education...

Classrooms should be free of pressure to "conform" to a set model for "four year olds" and allow them to learn as individuals.

Children's Center

Contact: Starlette Hopwood
Charles Yeager Career Center
10 Marland Ave.
Hamlin, WV 25523
(304) 824-3441

Program Type: Day Care Center

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 3 months - 5 years

Years in Operation: 3.5

An Idea to Share...

The children at Children's Center maintain a visible presence in the community by participating in local events such as community horse rides and Week of the Young Child. Special relationships are formed through regular visits to the Senior Center, nursing home and the library.

Exemplary Practices

- Accredited by NAEYC.
- Parents encouraged to visit at any time and participate in field trips, dinners and raffles.
- Supports the local community by providing safe and appropriate child care for GED students.
- A collaborative project between River Valley Child Development Services and the Lincoln County Board of Education.

Good Advice
from Children's Center...

Seek accreditation through NAEYC. It provides an opportunity to unite your program staff and families in a cooperative experience.

Family Matters

Child Care & Preschool

Contact: Katharine Chapman
1019 Winchester Ave.
Martinsburg, WV 25401
(304) 263-3727

Program Type: Child Care Center/Private Preschool

Community Served: suburban

Ages Served: 4 years

Years in Operation: 3

Exemplary Practices:

- Every attempt is made to include the heritage and traditions of each child served.
- Transitions from child care to kindergarten or any other event in a child's life is given priority so it is positive.
- Staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR.
- A parent information lending library includes books and videotapes available to parents.

An Idea to Share...

The center's bulletin board features a "Child of the Week" with pictures of the child and their family and information about the child's favorite activities, foods, toys and games.

Good Advice
from Family Matters...

Trained staff with low turnover is critical.

Friends-R-Fun

Child Development Center, Inc.Family Learning Center

Contact: Judy Olson
2128 Highway 41
Summersville, WV 26651
(304) 872-2157

Program Type: Child Care/Early Childhood Education Center, School-Age Program, Family Literacy/ GED Program

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 6 weeks - 12 years

Years in Operation: Child's Program 11 years, Family Learning Center 3 years (adults).

Exemplary Practices

- Accredited by NAEYC.
- Prenatal and parenting classes.
- Many staff members are enrolled in the Department of Labor's Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist 2 year program.
- Families stay involved through a variety of community activities including a Grandparent's Day, picnic, annual children's program and community guest lectures.

An Idea to Share...

The program makes use of a wide variety of community resources. For example, Nicholas County Community Action provides transportation for the Family Learning Center and Summer Day Camp for school-age children. The center also works with the Nicholas County Board of Education to provide preschool opportunities for children with special needs. The county Board of Education provides a speech therapist/special needs teacher on-site several days a week.

Good Advice
from Friends-R-Fun...

The greatest investment one can make is in the lives of others.

God's Little Growing Place

Contact: Mary Kelly
320 East Main Street
Harrisville, WV 26362
(304) 643-4688

Program Type: Private Preschool

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 3 to 5

Years in Operation: 7

Exemplary Practices:

- Wide community involvement in program by local businesses, churches, and farms.
- Letters are regularly sent home to parents with information about the units/topics that will be discussed during the week. In this way, parents are encouraged to reinforce ideas learned at school in the home. Parents also receive a monthly photograph of their child participating in a special activity.

An Idea to Share...

Farming is a strong part of the local culture. Many of the children's field trips are visits to local farms. At one farm, the children collect eggs and feed chickens and cows. At another they ride a pony. They also visit a buffalo farm. The children learn that Ritchie County is a community of hard-working individuals who care for one another.

Good Advice
from God's Little Growing Place...

Small child/staff ratios develop a strong rapport between child and teacher and teacher and parent.

Kidspace, Inc. Child Care Center

Contact: Carolee Cecil
1335 N. St. Rte. 2
New Martinsville, WV 26155
(304) 455-4644

Program Type: Day Care Center, Private Preschool, School-Age Program

Community Served: rural and suburban

Ages Served: 2 - 12 years

Years in Operation: 5

Exemplary Practices

- Diverse enrollment consists of both low income and high income students creating a blend of community individuals who benefit from each other.
- There is daily communication with parents through an information sheet called "My Very Special Day at Kidspace".

An Idea to Share...

Every year, the Wetzel County Hospital sponsors a Spring Art Show featuring the artwork of the children enrolled at Kidspace. The show is held during the Week of the Young Child. Typically, about 75 works of art by the children are on display.

Good Advice
from Kidspace...

Do not make unnecessary segregations between children receiving day care and children receiving preschool.

Little Kids Day Care Center

Contact: Loretta Stewart or Brenda Fisher
1975 Kelmont Lane
Sissonville, WV 25320
(304) 984-4008

Program Type: Day Care Center, Private Preschool

Community Served: suburban

Ages Served: 6 weeks to 5 years

Years in Operation: 6

Exemplary Practices:

- Staff are evaluated through classroom observation, self-evaluation and all participate in training sessions for early childhood caregivers. Some are enrolled in the U.S. Department of Labor's Apprenticeship program for Child Development Specialist while others have college credit hours towards a degree in education.
- A Parent's Night Out service and Summer Enrichment program provide valuable child care services to the families in the community.

An Idea to Share...

Throughout the year Little Kids makes use of "community helpers" in their area by inviting them to visit the center. Some past helpers include a fireman complete with fire truck, Smokey the Bear, a dentist and a doctor.

Good Advice
from Little Kids...

Always have the very best staff you can. This means being very selective when interviewing. Be particular about all issues.

LovingKindness Child Care Center

Contact: Michele Forsythe
3209 6th Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26101
(304)422-3085

Program Type: Day Care Center

Community Served: urban

Ages Served: 6 weeks - 12 years

Years in Operation: 5.5

Exemplary Practices

- Maintains open communication with area schools to keep abreast of kindergarten curriculum and school standards. This allows staff to help children with the transition to kindergarten.
- The children are very active in community events such as Christmas Parades and the St. Jude's Trike-a-Thon.

An Idea to Share...

In addition to utilizing newspaper ads, community magazine ads, radio advertising and word-of mouth referrals, LovingKindness also displays their center at local business fairs and community projects.

Good Advice
from LovingKindness...

Keep the children first, above all things.

My Mom & Me **Family Education Program**

Contact: Lynette Orbovich
120 Jackson St.
Fairmont, WV 26554
phone (304) 366-8142
fax (304) 366-8143

Program Type: Family Literacy

Community Served: urban and rural

Ages Served: infant to kindergarten

Years in Operation: 6 years

Exemplary Practices:

- Works to prevent intergenerational illiteracy by recruiting at risk mothers and their children and providing a family centered education program designed to break the cycle of under-education that results in poverty and welfare.
- Parent activities include parenting classes, PACT (Parent And Child Together), learning centers and reading activities.

An Idea to Share...

The staff at My Mom and Me Family Education program have learned that you need to have expectations of the families and make them known. They develop contracts with families so they understand the programs' expectations, why they are there and what they should expect from themselves. The contracts are referred to and updated as the parent's skills and abilities improve.

Good Advice
from My Mom & Me...

Staff must realize the parent is the decision maker. The staff can present ideas but if the parent is intimidated or their feelings and beliefs not respected, the parent will be lost and then too, the child.

North Central WV CAA Head Start

Contact: Marilyn Alvaro
213 Jackson Street
Fairmont, WV 26554
phone (304) 363-6869
fax (304) 366-8846

Program Type: Head Start, Home Visiting Program

Community Served: Rural-8 county program plus one delegated county

Ages Served: 3 and 4 year olds

Years in Operation: 32

Exemplary Practices

- Volunteers, parents, West Virginia University and Fairmont State students are accepted as equals in the program and are involved in the planning and implementation of everyday activities.
- North Central uses a case management system of providing families and children with comprehensive services.

An Idea to Share...

More than 10% of children enrolled have disabilities. These children are included in every aspect of the program emphasizing the development of social skills and positive self-esteem. Children are never grouped according to disability but are grouped according to ability.

Good Advice
from North Central WV Community Action Head Start

Encourage commitment and dedication from all partners. Do not fall into the habit of doing for families what families can do for themselves. Don't be an enabler!

Pleasant Day Schools

Contact: Shirley Tribbie
1315 Airport Blvd.
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 292-8078

Program Type: Day Care Center

Community Served: rural, suburban, urban

Ages Served: 2 months through 12 years

Years in Operation: 16

Exemplary Practices:

- Staff members are encouraged to become involved in community activities and are sometimes given paid leave to do so:
- All staff members without associate or professional degrees are required to participate in the U.S. Department of Labor's Child Care Apprenticeship Program.
- The first privately owned child care center in West Virginia to achieve accreditation by NAEYC.

An Idea to Share...

A potential safety problem began to develop when the children started standing on toys to see outside a classroom window. To remedy the situation, a ramp was built leading up to the window complete with handrails. The children can now safely view outside and the ramp has also become a creative play area.

Good Advice
from Pleasant Day Schools...

Don't ever assume all is well. No news is not always good news.

Princeton Community Hospital CD/DCC

Contact: Willa Whittaker
P.O. Box 1369, 12th Street
Princeton, WV 24740
phone **(304) 487-2354**
fax **(304) 487-2161**

Program Type: Day Care Center, School-Age Program

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 3 months through 12 years

Years in Operation: 14

Exemplary Practices

- Field placement site for Bluefield State College School of Nursing and Concord College education students.
- Developmental assessments are performed for each child and individual goals for that child are developed.
- There is a library at the center with professional reading resources for teachers and parenting and children's books and videos for families.

An Idea to Share...

The children enrolled at Princeton Community Hospital CD/DCC are introduced to Spanish to teach them that they are part of a larger world. During story time the teachers may read a book in Spanish. The children also learn the Spanish names of colors, days of the week, months, family members' names and other familiar objects.

Good Advice
from Princeton Community Hospital Child Development/Day Care Center

Access all available resources during problem solving processes.

Project TLC Teaming for Learning With the Community

Contact: Lyn Guy
P.O. Box 330
Union, WV 24983
phone (304) 772-3094
fax (304) 772-5020

Program Type: Head Start , Pre-School, School-Age Care, Early Intervention, Family Literacy, Home Visiting Program, Parents As Teachers

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: birth to age 9

Years in Operation: 3

Exemplary Practices:

- Provides a comprehensive, almost seamless transition of services for children.
- Communication with different agencies working for young children, parents and the community is accomplished through newsletters, newspaper articles and regular public meetings at elementary schools and other community locations.

An Idea to Share...

Parent Resource Centers are open at three elementary schools in the area. The centers are equipped with a telephone and computers and software for training parents in computer use. The Parent Resource Coordinator organizes parent volunteer programs, tutoring for at-risk students, a Breakfast Program for extended learning and parent communications.

Good Advice
from Project TLC...

Reform takes time and persistence. Just as the drop of water on granite can eventually wear a hole in the stone, so can steady, measurable progress pay off in big ways.

Sissie Cares Child Care & Preschool

Contact: Sharon Pinkney
612 Pratt Avenue
Weston, WV 26452
(304) 269-6024

Program Type: Day Care Center, Private Preschool, Early Intervention

Community Served: rural

Ages Served: 3 -6

Years in Operation: 2

Exemplary Practices

- Contracts to house the Preschool Handicapped/Early Intervention program with the local school system. Integrates 15 children with special needs with 40 other peers.
- Staff is trained in the High Scope Curriculum. There is computer usage at all age levels.

An Idea to Share...

Sissie Cares Child Care and Preschool hopes to encourage more high school students to volunteer at the center. They are presently working with the local school system to establish a high school credit for students who volunteer to work at the center.

Good Advice
from Sissie Cares...

- **Try to achieve "real" inclusion at this young age. Do not isolate children with delays from their normal peers.**

WV Public Employees Day Care

Contact: Debbie Fletcher
302 Jefferson Street
Charleston, WV
(304) 348-6580

Program Type: Head Start

Community Served: urban

Ages Served: 3 months to 7 years

Years in Operation: 5

Exemplary Practices:

- Works cooperatively with several State Departments to provide enriching experiences such as Smokey the Bear Demonstrations, a program with the Department of Wildlife and a taste party of foods unique to the state.
- Cultural Diversity is achieved by incorporating different languages, food, celebrations and life-styles into the program.
- Accredited by NAEYC.

An Idea to Share...

To further provide physical experiences at the center, two instructors visit weekly for one hour to teach dance and gymnastics to the children.

Good Advice
from WV Public Employees Day Care Center...

To maintain a commitment to professionalism, good early childhood educators need to show enthusiasm, have lots of energy, be creative and curious.

WVUH Child Development Center

Contact: Diane Rudash
P.O. Box 8012 Stadium Drive
Morgantown, WV 26506-8012
phone (304) 598-4788
fax (304) 598-4946

Program Type: Day Care Center

Community Served: rural, suburban, urban

Ages Served: 6 weeks to kindergarten

Years in Operation: 3

Exemplary Practices

- The center's foundation is based on a collaborative partnership with West Virginia University Hospitals and Corporate Family Solutions to help employees balance demands of work with needs of family.
- The center has a P.A.C. or Parent Advisory Committee with one full time and one part time parent from each classroom. The P.A.C. discusses concerns and plans fund-raisers.
- The center is accredited by NAEYC.

An Idea to Share...

WVUH Child Development Center strives to encourage family participation. In the fall there is a fall festival - children dress in Halloween costumes and play games. In the summer, the center rents a local pool and invites all parents and children to come swim, bring a picnic dinner and have fun.

Good Advice
from West Virginia University Hospital Child Development Center...

Giving children an enriched environment, curriculum choices and qualified staff provide an excellent educational beginning.

WVU-P Children's Room

Contact: Linda Novak
Rt. 5, Box 167-A
Parkersburg, WV 26101-9577
(304) 424-8311

Program Type: Day Care Center

Community Served: rural, suburban, urban

Ages Served: 2-12 years

Years in Operation: 25

Exemplary Practices:

- Curriculum is project based and developmentally appropriate. It incorporates all subjects focused around one topic making learning creative and exciting.
- All staff have 2 or 4 year degrees in Education or Early Childhood Education.

An Idea to Share...

West Virginia University-Parkersburg Children's Room is unique because of its affiliation with the university. The presence of the center allows single parents to attend school. It also provides parents many opportunities during the day to interact with their children.

Good Advice
from WVU-P Children's Room...

Children can lead us where they need to go in their discovery of the world around them.

YWCA Child Care Services

Contact: Lee Heavner
2501 Dudley Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26101
phone **(304) 422-5465**
fax **(304) 422-5466**

Program Type: Day Care Center, Private Preschool, After School and Summer Day Camp

Community Served: urban

Ages Served: 6 weeks - 12 years

Years in Operation: 36

Exemplary Practices

- The center is used by the local university's School of Nursing for part of its curriculum and practicum and by the local high school as curriculum for both the Family Living and Community Service classes.
- Each YWCA staff member attends monthly educational classes as well as being trained in CPR and First Aid and all must go through the Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist program.

An Idea to Share...

The Day Care is also made available for emergency use by students who are parents enrolled in the local high school. This way they will not miss any classes if their regular caregiver is unavailable.

Good Advice
from YWCA Child Care Services...

Quality child care and education must go hand in hand.

In Pursuit of Excellence

Essential Elements of Quality

For a program serving young children to be exemplary, it must meet certain quality standards. The EQUIP Committee of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission has developed an "Essential Elements of Quality for Early Care and Education" assessment tool to help programs determine how well they meet the essential elements of quality.

Quality standards that need to be met by all programs serving young children include:

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- The program environment promotes warm, positive and respectful interactions among staff/providers, children, and families/caregivers. Adults interact frequently with children showing affection and respect.
- The number of children in a group and the number of children per adult are limited in order to enhance adult-child interactions and assure the health, safety and well-being of children.
- Sufficient staff with responsibility for working directly with children are available to provide frequent personal contact, meaningful learning activities and supervision, and to offer immediate care as needed.
- Adults talk with individual children, and encourage all children of all ages to use language.
- The program establishes a working relationship with social services agencies, educational resources, medical and health facilities, regulatory agencies, and neighborhoods.
- Staff treat children of all races, religions, cultures and abilities equally, with respect and consideration.
- Adults encourage independence in children through appropriate age and developmental choices.
- Adults use positive techniques of guidance and positive approaches to help children act responsibly.
- Adults assist children to identify and effectively deal with their emotions.
- Adults encourage pro-social behaviors in children such as cooperating, helping, taking turns, and talking to solve problems.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Staff/providers establish regular and consistent ways of communicating with families.
- Families are encouraged to be involved partners in the program.
- Family members participate in decision-making and program evaluation.
- Families receive support, information and assistance from the staff/providers in accessing services to meet family needs and goals.

PROGRAM FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- The program is based on a mission statement and goals.
- Activities are based upon knowledge of child development and learning styles.
- Materials and equipment utilized are based upon knowledge of child development and learning.
- Activities are based on individual child interests, needs and strengths.
- Activities help children view themselves as members of their community.
- Activities promote the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of children.
- Activities are based on informal and/or formal strengths and needs.
- When necessary, modifications are made in the environment, schedule and activities to meet a child's special needs.

STAFF PROFESSIONALISM

- Staff/providers are qualified by education, training and experience to give quality care and education to children.
- Staff/providers value their career choice and continually seek to advance their knowledge and skills.
- Staff/providers follow a code of ethics that includes respect for children, families, colleagues and community. They are advocates for children and families.
- Compensation and benefits are comparable with other positions that have similar qualifications and responsibilities.

SAFE, HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- The physical environment includes an adequate amount of space for children's indoor and outdoor activities, for adult planning and management activities, and for adult privacy.
- The physical environment is planned to minimize accidents, injuries and unsafe conditions for children and staff/providers.
- The physical environment is planned to maximize the health of children, families and staff/providers.
- The physical environment and its furnishings are planned to support the development and learning potential of the children.
- Each adult has primary responsibility for an identified group of children for the majority of the program day. Every effort is made to assure secure relationships between children and adults.

HEALTH PROMOTION

- Children, staff/providers and families use measures to protect and promote good health.
- The program promotes good mental health in children, staff/providers and families.
- Healthful eating habits are encouraged through the provision of nutritious foods eaten in a pleasant social atmosphere.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

- Those providing services for children and their families understand and commit to practices which build on each child's culture, language, strengths and interests.
- The program is individualized to reflect the diversity of the families and the community and to build awareness and respect for others.
- Children with disabilities and developmental delays are integrated with more typically developing, same-age peers.

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

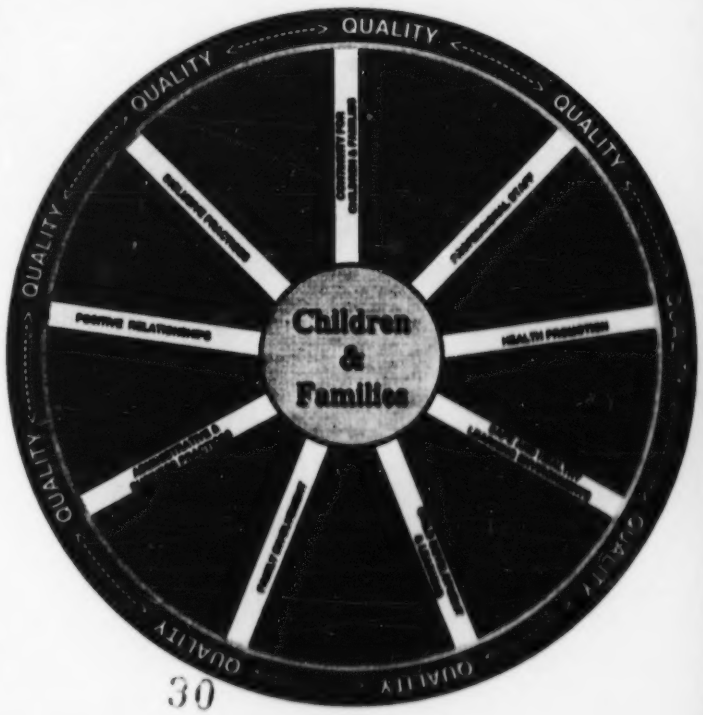
- The program complies with all applicable federal, state and local standards, laws and codes.
- The program follows sound administrative and business practices.
- Program policies are clearly communicated.
- The program assures a pleasant, professional working climate.

- The program is evaluated at least annually.
- Systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals for the children, parents, staff/providers is conducted to ensure that quality care and education are provided.
- The program develops a process to document reasons that parents are not participating.

CONTINUITY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Early care and education programs collaborate within the community to develop awareness, a common mission and inclusive, comprehensive services for children and families.
- Early care and education programs and families work together to ensure a smooth transition for each child and family between levels in a program, from program to program, and from grade to grade.
- Staff/providers across settings have opportunities to build relationships and learn with one another through training and sharing opportunities.

Interest and support for the development of a system of continuity and quality services for young children and their families is evolving from local communities. Parents in need of early childhood services experience difficulty in finding and maintaining quality services. The only way in which quality for children will become common practice is for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, communities, neighborhoods and state agencies to come together in a joint effort to ensure that all programs for children in West Virginia maintain essential elements of quality that reflect best practices in early care and education.



For more information about the Essential Elements of Quality for Early Care and Education Programs document and assessment tool, please contact the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, Building 1, Room R-150, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305 (304) 558-0600.

The Benefits of Quality Programs for Young Children

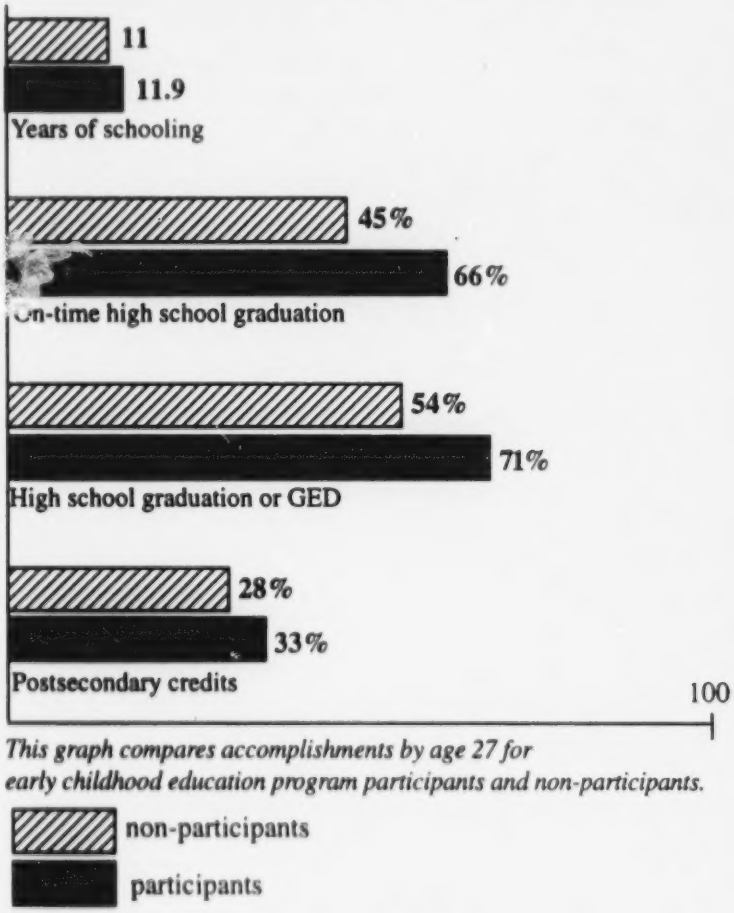
The High/Scope Perry Preschool study examined children who were born into poverty and at high risk of failing in school. The study showed that children who attended good, quality preschool programs:

- entered school ready to learn
- had higher grade point averages and fewer retentions in elementary school
- had higher graduation and college attendance rates
- had higher monthly and annual earnings.

Of those not in quality preschool programs:

- 35% had five or more arrests
- 80% received social services assistance
- only 54% graduated from high school.

EARLY EDUCATION BENEFITS



This graph compares accomplishments by age 27 for early childhood education program participants and non-participants.

non-participants

participants

"A good start in life can do more to promote learning and prevent damage than we ever imagined."

-Carnegie Corporation of New York

RESOURCES

Accreditation

NAEYC
National Association for the
Education of Young Children
1509 16th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-1426
1-800-424-2460

Advocacy

Coalition for WV Children
P.O. Box 3839
Charleston, WV 25338
1-800-883-5190
304-898-6012

Child Care Resource & Referral

1-800-CARE-202

Early Intervention & Special Needs

University Affiliated Center for
Developmental Disabilities
(304) 293-4692

West Virginia Part H Early Intervention
1-800-642-8522

Family Services

Family Matters
1-888-WV FAMILY

Health

Immunization Program
Bureau of Public Health
1422 Washington Street, E.
Charleston, WV 25301

New River Health Association
Rt. 1 Box 615-A
Scarbro, WV 25917
304-465-0470

Office of Maternal and Child Health
1116 Quarrier Street
Charleston, WV 25301
1-800-642-8522

Literacy

Adult Education Hotline
1-800-642-2670

West Virginia Literacy Foundation
P.O. Box 2987
Charleston, WV 25330
304-343-7323

Nutrition

Energy Express
WVU Extension Service
(304) 293-2694

WV Coalition on Food and Nutrition
P.O. Box 259
Romney, WV 26757
(304) 822-5343

Professional Development

Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist
U.S. Dept. of Labor, WV Office BAT
Room 305, 550 Eagan Street
Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 347-5141

WV Early Childhood Training Calendar
c/o River Valley Child Development Services
2850 5th Avenue
Huntington, WV 25702

Transition

Operation Tadpole
West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs and Assurances
Building 6 Room 304
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-2692

Volunteers

WV Commission for National and Community Service
One United Way Square
Charleston, WV 25301
1-800-WV HELPS

**WHEN IT COMES TO FAMILY MATTERS,
WE CAN HELP YOU MAKE THE RIGHT CALL.**

1 888 WV FAMILY

FAMILY Matters

1-888-983-2645 (V/TDD)
Internet http://www.msys.net/wvfamily
e-mail wvfamily@msys.net
BBS(Modem) 1-800-558-2357

DIRECTING YOU TO THE SERVICES YOU NEED

— EQUIP —

Funds for Exemplary Program Visitations

The EQUIP Committee of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission wants to encourage others in the early childhood field to visit the exemplary programs in West Virginia. An on-site visit to a quality program for young children can be an enlightening and rewarding experience. By observing the children in a quality setting, you can witness firsthand the benefits gained from a program's quality efforts. Visiting a quality program for young children can be an educational, informational and inspirational experience.

To encourage visits to the exemplary programs, the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission has established a limited number of stipends. The specifics of this fund are as follows:

- Between 30 and 40 stipends are available.
- Stipends are a flat rate of $100 each.
- Only 1 stipend per center allowed; programs with more than one center may receive 2 stipends.
- Stipends must be used to visit at least one of the 25 programs, either one of the 7 exemplary programs and/or one of the programs with exemplary components.
- The stipend could help with travel expenses, cost of hiring substitutes, etc. You could send more than one staff person or visit several nearby programs to "stretch" the funds.
- Applications must be received by October 31, 1997.
- Visits must be completed and funds requested by December 31, 1997.
- Stipends will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are gone.

The process for obtaining a stipend is:

1. Complete and mail the application on the following page.
2. After you receive written approval, schedule and complete your visit(s). Have the director of the program(s) you visited sign the follow-up sheet.
3. Complete and mail the follow-up sheet.
4. You will receive a check for the stipend amount.

For more information, contact:
Shelley Messinger
River Valley Child Development Services
2850 5th Avenue
Huntington, WV 25702
1-800-804-6020

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Application for Stipend
Exemplary Program Visitations

NAME _____

CENTER OR PROGRAM _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Number of stipends requested: _____ (only 1 stipend per center or 2 stipends per multi-center program)

Program you wish to visit: _____

Why did you choose this particular program? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Names of individuals making the visit: _____

_____

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 31, 1997.

MAIL APPLICATIONS TO:
Shelley Messinger
River Valley Child Development Services
2850 5th Avenue
Huntington, WV 25702
1-800-804-6020

Follow-Up Sheet
Exemplary Program Visitations

NAME _____

CENTER OR PROGRAM _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

Name of program(s) and date(s) visited: _____

_____

Who participated in the visit(s)? _____

_____

_____

What information was gained? _____

_____

_____

_____

How will this information be used in your center? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Signature of Director of Program(s) Visited ***Signature of Person Completing This Form***

MAIL TO:
Shelley Messinger, River Valley Child Development Services, 2850 5th Avenue, Huntington, WV 25702
1-800-804-6020

FUNDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS FOR ACCREDITATION

by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
A Division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

"The Future Is In Our Hands"

The Child Care and EQUIP (Early Education Quality Improvement Project) Committees of the Governor's Early Childhood Implementation Commission are encouraging and supporting high quality child care services through the accreditation of early childhood programs in West Virginia. Interested early childhood programs are encouraged to apply for a stipend to offset the cost of accreditation. A limited number of stipends will be available and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are gone.

The process for obtaining a stipend is:

1. Submit a **letter of intent and initial $50 application fee** to Shelley Messinger, River Valley Child Development Services, 2850 5th Avenue, Huntington, WV 25702 (1-800-804-6020). The $50 fee is applied toward the application fee. Accreditation fees are paid at two points in the process. The **application fee** is paid to initiate the process and to receive the self-study materials including multiple copies of the observation form and staff and parent questionnaires. This fee is determined by the total number of children enrolled regardless of whether they attend on a half-day or full-day basis. Examples of the fee for **Level 1** (60 or fewer children) $100 application fee and $250 validation fee; **Level 2** (61 to 120 children) $150 application fee and $400 validation fee; and **Level 3** (121 to 240 children) $250 application fee and $500 validation fee.

2. After you receive written approval from River Valley Child Development Services, you will receive a check for the remainder of the application fee. Next, contact the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1-800-424-2460) to begin the accreditation process by sending a letter of intent and check for the entire application fee to initiate the process and request the self-study materials (Attention: Accreditation, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426).

3. Requests for a stipend must be received by October 31, 1997 and the accreditation process must begin by December 31, 1997.

4. The **total validation fee** will be paid upon request if based on the results of the self-study a program decides to pursue accreditation. This fee is determined by the largest number of children attending on a given day. For this fee, the program receives an on-site validation visit and the accreditation decision.

Accreditation Expresses Quality

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. The purpose of Academy is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs. The Academy accomplishes this purpose by developing training resources, providing public information about the importance of high quality early childhood programs, and accrediting programs that voluntarily demonstrate compliance with the Academy's criteria for high quality early childhood programs.

High Quality Early Childhood Programs

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs defines a high quality early childhood program as one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults - parents, staff, and administrators - who are involved in the program. Each day of a child's life is viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and contributing member of society.

The criteria for high quality early childhood programs address all aspects of an early childhood program including: interactions among staff and children, curriculum, staff and parent interactions, administration, staff qualifications and development, staffing patterns, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, and program evaluation. Nationwide accreditation of early childhood programs benefits parents, children, program personnel, and society.

Accreditation Process

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs administers a national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for all types of preschools, kindergartens, child care centers, Head Start, and school-age child care programs. The Academy accredits high quality early childhood programs through a process in which a program's administrators, staff, and parents join with representatives of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs to determine whether that program meets nationally recognized criteria for high quality.

The accreditation process involves three steps:

Step 1 - Self-Study

Program personnel and parents conduct a self-study to determine how well the program meets the Academy's criteria, make needed improvements, and report the compliance with the criteria on the program description form provided by the Academy.

Step 2 - Validation

Trained validators make an on-site visit to verify the accuracy of the Program Description.

Step 3 - Accreditation Decision

A three-person Commission considers the validated Program Description and makes the accreditation decision based on professional judgement. Programs are not required to demonstrate 100% compliance.

Benefits of Accreditation

- Assists parents in their search for high quality programs for their children.
- Improves the quality of group programs available for young children and their families.
- Provides a valuable professional development experience for teachers and directors.
- Assures contributors to early childhood programs of a solid investment.
- Provides professional and public recognition for high quality early childhood programs.

Cost of Accreditation

The accreditation system is a nonprofit, self-supporting, and permanent project. The ongoing operation of the system is sustained by fees paid by participating programs. The cost of accreditation varies depending upon the number of children enrolled in the program. Programs occupying different locations, even if administered by a central agency, must apply and be considered separately. A program that has one administrator and that occupies more than one adjacent building is considered one program.